



TOWN OF LEDYARD

Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

Chairman
Mike Marelli

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

6:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Hybrid Format

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to by Chairman Marelli at 6:31 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present Commissioner Roberta Levandoski
Commissioner David Holdridge
Commissioner Kathleen Edgecomb
Commissioner Betsy Graham
Commissioner Barbara Kil
Commissioner Michael E. Marelli
Alternate Member David Cohen

Excused Commissioner James Harwood

Betsy Graham was present via Zoom.

Also in attendance:

Naomi Rodriguez, Town Councilor

Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor joined the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

James Cohen was appointed as a voting member for James Harwood.

Naomi Rodriguez, Town Councilor asked for a few moments to recognize April as National Volunteer Appreciation Month and thanked members of the Commission for the work they do for the Town. She presented each member with a gift certificate to local businesses, including Valentino's. She said there are more than 200 residents who volunteer their time, "Ledyard cannot function without you". Councilor Buhle also thanked Commission members for their time and brought chocolate chip cookies to share.

The Commission welcomed Dave Cohen, the new alternate member to the Commission.

III. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Motion to APPROVE Regular Meeting Minutes from March 12, 2024, as written.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Michael E. Marelli

SECONDER: David Holdridge

AYE 7 Levandoski Holdridge Edgecomb Graham Kil Marelli Cohen

EXCUSED 1 Harwood

IV. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Correspondence.

Chairman Marelli spoke with Maggie Jones, who said she is finishing her report on White-Hall but as of yet no report has been submitted.

The Town is looking for articles for the Spring/Summer newsletter. Ms. Edgecomb will submit an article to the town about the Commission's rain gardens project. Submissions are due on April 22, 2024.

Aquarion Water Company is looking for volunteer nominees for its Environmental Champions Awards. Winners will receive a \$5,000 grant for an environmental non-profit group of their choosing. Application is due May 3, 2024.

Motion to NOMINATE Betsy Graham for the Environmental Champions Award.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Michael E. Marelli

SECONDER: Barbara Kil

AYE 7 Levandoski Holdridge Edgecomb Graham Kil Marelli Cohen

EXCUSED 1 Harwood

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

1. Public Comments.

None.

VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. Informational Items.

The Commission will participate in the annual Regatta Day Festival on June 8, 2024, from 10:00 a.m to 2:00 p.m to celebrate the Yale-Harvard Regatta. The rain date will be held on June 9, 2024.

The Town funded the Commission at the same level as last year.

Chairman Marelli continues to work on a list of Town-owned open spaces.

Chairman Marelli attended the March 25, 2024, meeting of the Mystic River Watershed Alliance.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Property Walks.

None.

2. Financial Reports.

No changes since last month.

3. Pollinator Pathways Project continued.

No comments.

4. Field clearing at White-Hall Property.

Two to three acres need to be cleared but the Commission is having a hard time finding someone to do the work. The meadows should be cut back every one to two years. Ms. Graham will reach out to Groton Open Space Association to see if they can recommend someone.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

5. Areas of interest and goals for 2024 continued.

No comments.

6. Request for Budget item continued.

The Commission is waiting for more information.

7. 100 Whalehead Road property.

Chairman Marelli will post medallions along the path to discourage hikers from crossing into private property. He will also mark the trail better with blue paint and put up a sign pointing to the parking lot. The property owner will put up no trespassing signs.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

8. Any Other Old Business to come before the Commission.

Forestry report on Burton Property - State DEEP completed a thorough field visit to Burton property. The Commission will now take this report and come up with a plan to work with abutting property owners - Ledyard High School and Avalonia Land Trust. The plan is to maintain the property and keep it open to the public. The Commission will investigate applying for grants to maintain the property. Items that need to be addressed are removal of invasive species and annual maintenance to keep out invasive species. Native trees also need to be planted. Chairman Marelli will contact Avalonia and see they will work with the Commission on a forestry plan. There is money in the budget for trail maintenance.

Motion to APPROVE renewal of CT Land Conservation Council membership and to make a \$150 donation to the Council.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

MOVER: David Holdridge

SECONDER: Michael E. Marelli

AYE 7 Levandoski Holdridge Edgecomb Graham Kil Marelli Cohen

EXCUSED 1 Harwood

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion on the New England Fisheries Management Council's Herring Management Plan.

Ms. Graham drafted a letter that Chairman Marelli will take to the New England Fisheries Management Councils Herring Management meeting on April 17, 2024 on the proposed changes. He will also speak in support of the changes. Commission members can also send letters individually.

Motion to APPROVE sending a letter to the New England Fisheries Management Council to support the CT DEEP's suggestions regarding protecting Atlantic Herring Amendment 10 Scoping Document to support conservation and ecosystem restoration to preserve river herring.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Kathleen Edgecomb

SECONDER: Roberta Levandoski

AYE 7 Levandoski Holdridge Edgecomb Graham Kil Marelli Cohen

EXCUSED 1 Harwood

2. Any Other New Business to come before the Commission.

Ms. Levandoski suggested that the Commission considers a Town wide composting program. Preston and Groton already participate in composting programs. The Ledyard Town Council will hear a presentation from SCRRA on the program at its meeting on April 10, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to ADJOURN the Regular Meeting at 7:56 p.m.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: David Holdridge

SECONDER: Betsy Graham

AYE 7 Levandoski Holdridge Edgecomb Graham Kil Marelli Cohen

EXCUSED 1 Harwood

DISCLAIMER: Although we try to be timely and accurate these are not official records of the Town.